A Duty Pharmacists Owe Their Unregistered Apprentices.*

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In this country of rapid growth and startling development we become accustomed to great changes in our laws, habits and customs without fully realizing their real significance. Thus it is that the older pharmacists who registered on account of being in business, or on their diplomas, pay but little attention to the apprentice who is anxious to register on a certain date, usually not far distant.

The young man, or woman, true to that practical turn of mind which characterizes the apprentice when confronted with a task, looks around for the easiest means of registering. A species of instinctive reasoning suggests a visit to the next examination "just to see how it is conducted." After the ordeal is over the apprentice returns home not one degree sadder, but much wiser, and at once seeks the quiz book which contains the greatest proportion of the questions asked on the examination.

It is unnecessary for me to dwell on the folly of such a course. It is not only time and money wasted, but a wrong estimate is formed of the purpose of registration.

The same amount of money spent for suitable books, and scarcely more time devoted to them, under the direction of the preceptor, would have placed the apprentice in a position to pass any reasonable board examination. What is more, a proper habit of study would more than likely have been formed.

In order to learn the approximate proportion of candidates who take the examination for the purpose of gathering information, I addressed the following letter to the secretary of each of the forty-eight boards of pharmacy and received replies from twenty-eight: —

"We are confident that a large number of the candidates for examination before the Boards of Pharmacy attend the first time with a view of becoming acquainted with the methods of the examination, when the money and time spent should have been employed in preparing for the examination. In order to obtain more definite information on the subject we would ask you to give approximate answers to the following questions: —

"1. About what per cent of those who apply for examination before your board fail to pass on their first appearance?

"2. About what per cent of those who fail on their first examination apply with the idea of becoming familiar with the methods of the examination and are not surprised at their failure?

"3. About what is the average expense borne by a candidate appearing before your board for one examination? We refer to the expenses including railroad fare, hotel bills, etc."

The average of the twenty-eight responses is as follows: Question No. 1, fifty-two per cent. Question No. 2, twenty-four per cent. Question No. 3, $14.00.

Cannot the American Pharmaceutical Association take some action which will awaken the registered pharmacists of this country to a realization of their duty in this matter?

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* Read at the Montreal meeting of the American Pharmaceutical Association.